



# ***CITY NEWS***

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**DATE:** May 18, 2006  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**\*\* Media Advisory \*\***

## **Police to focus on traffic safety as summer holidays approach**

With the approach of the end of school and summer holidays, Wichita Police Officers will be placing an additional emphasis on traffic safety May 22 through June 4 throughout the city. This enforcement effort is a part of the statewide project under the Kansas Department of Transportation ***Click It or Ticket*** campaign.

“Memorial Day is the first major holiday to kick off the summer season, and we want to ensure that everyone is buckled up and driving safely,” said Patrol West Traffic Sergeant Jerry Quick. “We want motorists to arrive safely at their destinations so they will enjoy the holiday and not be struck by tragedy, or the loss or serious injury of a loved one.”

Officers from the **Patrol West Bureau** will be monitoring two of the most traveled thoroughfares in that Bureau: West 21<sup>st</sup> Street and West Kellogg. They will be focusing on adult and child restraint violations, along with speeding and other violations that are contributing factors to accidents. Several DUI saturation patrols will also be conducted within the Patrol West Bureau.

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Additionally, **Patrol West** will be running a DUI check lane from 11 p.m. on May 26 to around 3 a.m. on May 27. The check lane will be located on Meridian between Harry and Oliver. Drivers who approach the lane should be prepared to present their driver's license and proof of insurance. Any drivers who cannot produce these items, or who are suspected of driving under the influence, will be asked to pull over into another lane.

Officers from the **Patrol East Bureau** will be working high volume traffic areas and high accident locations on Kellogg and Rock Road. LIDAR speed enforcement projects will be conducted on May 27 and June 3.

**Patrol South** Officers will spend a number of hours conducting enforcement efforts on Kellogg between Meridian and I-135. They will also focus efforts around schools to make sure that the school year concludes safely for students, teachers and parents.

The **Patrol North Bureau** will be focusing its efforts on occupant protection. They will conduct a seatbelt check lane from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. on May 22 at 13<sup>th</sup> and Woodland. Additionally, Patrol North will run special traffic enforcement projects on May 26, 27 and 29 and June 2 and 3. Officers will be watching for speeders, impaired drivers and other traffic infractions that cause accidents, with an emphasis on occupant protection.

Wichita has recorded 14 fatalities between January 1 and May 16, 2006. Of those 14 fatalities, two of them, or 14 percent, were alcohol/drug related. During the same time period in 2005 there were 12 fatalities, and five of them were alcohol/drug related.

Seat belt use in Kansas has increased since 2000, when only 61 percent of the people were found to have buckled up. The latest survey found that 69 percent of Kansas drivers and front-seat passengers were wearing seat belts, compared with the national average of 83 percent.

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The gap was even bigger among those traveling in pickups, with just over half the Kansans - 52 percent - buckling up, while nationally the figure was 73 percent. Kansas doesn't have a "primary" seat-belt law that would allow police to stop drivers for not wearing seat belts, but they can issue \$10 tickets to unbuckled drivers and front-seat passengers when they make a stop for other violations.

These traffic safety enforcement projects are being funded by the Special Traffic Enforcement Program grant (STEP) from the Kansas Department of Transportation. For more information on any of these projects, please contact Sgt. Chris McAuliffe, Patrol North 688-9500; Sgt. Donnie Phelps, Patrol South 337-9200; Sgt. Jerry Quick, Patrol West 337-9400, or Sgt. James Krok, Patrol East 688-9331.